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DD/S

56-1402

16 APR 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT : Evaluation of Wives of Applicants and Employees Subject to Duty Abroad

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for DD/S approval. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph 6.
2. Attached are copies of two interesting articles which appeared in 15 April newspapers. Both concern the important role of wives in the conduct of business, especially in foreign service. One article, concerning USIA, indicates that agency questions an applicant for foreign service regarding his wife's background, interests, and attitude toward service overseas. It is realized that this is a matter which heretofore has been considered many times by various Agency officials. However, changes in public opinion, brought about by publicity such as the attached articles, may warrant another review at this time.
3. Our position is somewhat different from that of USIA since we are more concerned with employees now on duty and expect to fill most future vacancies through the JCF program which involves younger people, many of whom will be single when appointed. With these younger people, we are faced more with a training program than with initial selection. However, we will also be employing some senior officers from time to time, and we also must accept the fact that we now have some employees whose wives are not ideally suited to life in many foreign areas. To my knowledge, and undoubtedly that of others who have observed morale and various other factors abroad, there are many instances of serious problems which might have been avoided if the wife of the individual concerned had been more adaptable to the situation overseas. It is believed that we might profit by the example of USIA in taking steps to evaluate wives of applicants and in identifying wives of present employees who probably would not adjust themselves to life abroad.
4. Various components of the Agency, including Training, Medical, Security, and Personnel, are now engaged in some form of evaluation or indoctrination of wives and families scheduled to go abroad. Other offices may be taking steps to meet the wives and families of individuals being considered for foreign duty. Certainly, the DD/P considers the wife in proposing senior officials for such key positions abroad as Chief of Station.
5. We now have, in draft form, a revised Personal History Statement and a supplement which is designed to bring certain information up to date on an annual basis. These forms are now being coordinated with the Director of Security and the General Counsel in final form preliminary to submitting them to the DDCI through you. Addition to these forms of certain questions regarding wives, such as those apparently asked by USIA, might be helpful. Also, evaluative data concerning wives might be obtained through use of Part II of the Fitness Report.

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6. It is recommended that submission of the PHS and its supplement to the DDCI be deferred pending consideration by the Career Council of a plan for obtaining and evaluating data on wives of applicants and of present employees who are subject to duty abroad. It is estimated that this action would delay issuance of the revised PHS and supplement for approximately two months.

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Deputy Director of Personnel

Attachments

*— O.D. [unclear]
removed prior to filing. — See Subj. file*

The recommendation in paragraph 6 is approved.

151 L. K. White
Deputy Director (Support)

24 Apr 56
Date

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